



The Rocky Mountain West's arid climate, coupled with an ongoing drought, makes a convincing argument for the use of alternatives to traditional, and thirsty, landscaping that features vast areas of turf.

Tim LaPan, Denver Water conservation specialist and landscape architect, foreground, stands atop a plot of artificial grass, located near the loading dock area on the northeast side of Denver Water's administration building. He examines a handful of man-made "fertilizer," composed of tiny rubber beads made from ground-up tires, which are spread on the artificial turf to make it "stand up" like the real grass. However, unlike the "real thing," the artificial turf and its "fertilizer" require no water and may be a practical alternative for real grass in places such as traffic medians and other high-impact areas. With LaPan is Dale Collett, representative for the artificial turf product.

Xeriscaping, a landscape design strategy that incorporates vegetation that thrives in dry climates and requires minimal watering, offers a practical -- and attractive -- alternative to more traditional, and water-consumptive, landscape architecture. Pictured are, in foreground, Day Lilies (*hemerocallis sp*), and Blanket Flower (*gaillardia aristata*).